



ADVANCING DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TRANSNATIONAL  
COOPERATION IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE

**14-15 OCTOBER 2009**  
**SEE ANNUAL CONFERENCE**  
HOTEL HOLIDAY INN • **SARAJEVO** • BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

### **Workshop 3**

Title: **Territorial cooperation for railway connections in South East Europe**

#### **Background**

The analysis of the results of projects approved within the 1<sup>st</sup> call for proposals of the SEE Programme has shown a limited interest from the side of the applicants to projects related to cooperation for the development and improvement of railway connections across and to the South East Europe Area.

The analysis on the basis of the SEE Operational Programme, instead, highlights that the railway network in the territory of the programme area continue to be not sufficiently developed in respect of the current and potential transport demand and economic scenarios.

These are the reasons why the SEE Operational Programme allocates approximately 8 Mio Euro for railways related projects and additional 21 Mio Euro for projects related to multimodal transport and intelligent transport system.

#### **Objectives**

The workshop's aim is to clarify and better tune the Programme to support the territorial cooperation for the development of sustainable railway connections, taking into consideration the state of the art of the railway infrastructure and services in the SEE area, the regulating framework and the existing plans and resources for their development, for better and safer railway connections, intermodal infrastructure as well as increased and efficient operating system.

#### **Target groups**

- Ministries of Transport of the SEE partner countries
- Railway service providers
- Regional and local administrations
- National and regional development institutions and agencies
- Railway infrastructure companies
- Transport research centres
- Transport related EU networks

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## Draft Agenda

9h00 – 9h30	Facilitation of the improvement of railway connections as a strategic aim of the SEE Programme. <i>Roland Arbter – Austrian representative of the SEE MC</i>
9h30 – 9h45	Lessons learned from the first call for proposals: refining the background to steer more and better projects on rail transport <i>Gusztáv Csomor – SEE JTS representative</i>
9h45 – 10h00	Facilitation of railway connections: possible actions financed by the SEE Transnational Cooperation Programme <i>Roberta Calcina – SEE JTS representative</i>
10h00 – 10h15	The Trans European Network strategy on railway accessibility in the SEE Programme area and the role of the SEE Programme in facilitating the cooperation within the region. <i>Carlo Fortuna – Central European Initiative</i>
10h15 – 10h30	State of the art and future development of railway connections in the Western Balkans and with neighbouring countries <i>Izet Bajrambašić - SEETO steering Committee – Ministry of Communications and Transport of Bosnia and Herzegovina</i>
10h30 – 11h00	Coffee Break
11h00 – 11h15	" Harmonization of conditions of different rail transport systems " – <i>Jaromir Cekota, UNECE Working Party on Rail Transport</i>
11h15 – 11h30	Case study The Alpine Convention: tailoring national strategies on regional needs – focus on railways <i>Marcella Morandini –Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention</i>
11h30 – 12h00	<i>The role of the regions for sustainable and interoperable railways in SEE</i> <i>Mr Gordon Keymer - COTER Commission, Committee of Regions</i>
12h00 -13h00	Round table discussion on project proposals & other inputs with the main stakeholders and participants <i>(moderation: Roland Arbter)</i>

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## The workshop

Rail transport and how the SEE Programme can facilitate its development in the region has been the focus of the workshop 3 of the SEE annual event, *Territorial cooperation for railway connections in South East Europe*.

Main aim of the workshop was *promotion the development of high quality transnational cooperation projects in the SEE area in the field of accessibility, with specific focus on railways and intermodal solutions for both passengers and good*.

The choice stems from the gap analysis of the 1<sup>st</sup> Call for Proposal, which has shown a limited interest in the specific transport mode, in comparison to the relevance and budget that the Programme allocates to it.

Moreover, the results of the 1<sup>st</sup> call have shown some unclerness on the role that the Programme could play in enhancing the accessibility to and in the Programme area, with special regard to rail accessibility, considering that national governments in cooperation with other EU bodies are in majority of cases in charge of the implementation of infrastructure and services, often financially supported by the intervention of external donors. Coordination is mostly bilateral between a single country and its neighbours.

The SEE JTS tried to list the reasons explaining the low interest within the 1<sup>st</sup> CfP, on the one hand highlighting that the topic itself - railways - needs very expensive investments. On the other hand, the weak involvement of stakeholders at any level, national, regional, and some unclear explanatory parts of the programme documents, especially missing clear examples of transnational projects for the SEE Programme, could be among the reasons.

The SEE JTS tried to clarify how important is the role that the SEE Programme can play in the implementation of soft activities having a transnational impact, offering a long list of examples of solo or complementary activities that the Programme could potentially fund within a project proposal (**see attached presentation**). Possible activities are related to **coordination for the realisation and management of structures**, to **safety and reliability** of infrastructures and services, to maintenance and **improvement of cross border procedures** that will bring to **reduction of waiting time and improvement of the transnational accessibility**. **Feasibility studies, impact assessment, monitoring**, both of primary, but also on regional transport are, among others, possible in the framework of the SEE Programme as well. Transnational **services** that could be financed through the SEE Programme include services for non-stop journeys (one stop shop and coordinated intermodality) both for passengers and goods. Also to be mentioned is the importance of transnational ICT facilities for an integrated accessibility that could lead to coordinated

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information, services, and procedures. Multilingual **information campaigns raising the awareness** of the possible regional links within the SEE Programme area are also needed and currently to be improved.

The contribution of Mr. Fortuna (Central European Initiative) on the Trans-European Network strategy on railway accessibility helped identifying well targeted complementary elements that could improve coordination of the SEE Programme to TEN strategy: **promotion of rail transport, definition of the role of national governments, regional, cities, improvement of capacity and efficiency, integration of modes, last mile investments, feeder projects to ten-t corridors, administrative rail interoperability** (i.e. common special agency for rail operators at border crossing). The presentation highlighted the need to tackle with different accents the passenger transportation in comparison to the transportation of goods as they imply different dynamics, involved subjects. For the special topic of rail freight transport, important examples of activities were related to **rail market opening, capacity and equipment of terminals** (opening hours, storing facilities for temporary goods, handling, capacities, handling of dangerous goods, service for containers maintenance, repair etc), **pre-investment studies, synergies in terminal management**. Mr. Fortuna also stressed the importance on having coherent intermodal projects combining the rail and the maritime/inland waterway modality able to involve both ports authority and railways agencies. According to EU policy on environmental sustainability, more importance should be given to projects which deal with issue of modal shift from road to less polluting modes of transport.

Mr. Bajrambašić reported on the work done by the South East Europe Transport Observatory (SEETO), the CORE network and its coordination with the TEN-T network, the Multi Annual Plan (2009-2013) available on the SEETO website ([www.seetoint.org](http://www.seetoint.org)). Mr. Bajrambašić, while informing of the high amount of money needed for infrastructures, which is neither in the aims nor in the availability of the SEE Transnational Cooperation Programme, stressed the need for **connection between the Western Balkans and its neighbours through improving cross border procedures** (harmonized infrastructure charging regime; passenger border controls on moving trains, introduction of electronic data interchange (EDI) for freight operations, greater integration of railway border crossing policies), activities that need strong interaction and coordination between the SEE Transnational Programme, the IPA CBC programmes and the SEETO activities.

The representative of the rail transport team of the working party on transport of UNECE, Mr. Jaromir Cekota, also clarified the border crossing obstacles as a core of their agreements (AGC, AGTC), the UN setting the framework for efficient border controls and harmonization of legal regimes. **Need for coordination** is highlighted as necessary for avoiding duplication. Mr. Cekota highlighted how the **improvement of** non-expensive

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**procedures** is positively affecting the performance of rail connection and its attractiveness for the passengers and goods. An interesting example provided by the UNECE is The Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP), which addresses key challenges to achieve sustainable transport patterns and to encourage governments, at national and local levels, to pursue an integrated approach to policymaking and to put sustainable mobility at the top of the international agenda.

The workshop clarified the importance of regions and cities as main beneficiaries of the SEE Transnational Cooperation Programme and for the need to tailor mainstream top-down plans to the need and special morphology and/or dynamics of their territories.

Ms. Morandini brought the example of the Alpine Convention, which together with the Carpathian Convention recognizes the specificity of one of the most important European mountainous regions, providing a legal framework for tailoring national strategies on regional needs and promoting a coherent joint development over national borders. The same approach used for the Alps, a region with common needs even if shared among 8 Countries; same approach can be transferred and adapted to other macro regions in the SEE Programme area (i.e. Carpathian Basin, Danube region). The Transport Protocol of the Alpine Convention is a common planning instrument and can be considered as a sort of manual for implementing a coordinated, sustainable and coherent joint transport policy over national borders. Specific measures addressing **mobility needs within the regions**, the one **originating from or directed to the region** and the one crossing the region to reach other destinations are considered. Thus the involvement of the regional and local stakeholders could integrate the regional needs to top-down transnational agreements (TEN-t), included regional mobility dynamics (i.e. commuters, students, and tourists), conservation or landscape protection, regional economic dynamics, spatial planning and sustainable development. Again the need to **differentiate between passenger transportation and goods transportation** is clear, as well as the importance to pay equal attention to both.

The last intervention, a statement of the representative of the Committee of Regions, Mr. Keymer, clarified the need to **involve regions and cities in a more significant way**.

The suggestions collected during the presentation stimulated discussion and some inputs and project ideas were offered by the audience. Mr. Wimroither (ÖBB Infrastruktur AG) described the work of the association "Korridor X Plus" and the results achieved until now; Mr. Migliorini presented its project idea related to the "*Implementation of a decision support system (DSS) for testing the sustainability of the future transport network*"; on behalf of Mr. Lung (Austria Federal Ministry of Transport) two project ideas, "*Sustainable Mobility and Tourism in sensitive mountain areas of the Alps and the Carpathians*" and

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“Sustainable Mobility and Tourism in the Danube Region” were also presented. As a last intervention, Mr. Renner (Geodetic Institute of Slovenia) highlighted the need to provide accessibility also for people with disability and presented its project idea related to transnationally integrated accessibility information tools and maps for blind people.

## Conclusions

1. The Programme needs to **involve the stakeholders** at any level: national, regional administrations and cities as well, for representing the first/last mile in the transnational accessibility of the area, also for rail and intermodal accessibility. This would enable a bottom up approach, more tailored strategies and higher creativity taking into account regional mobility needs and dynamics as well as geographical features;
2. There is a clear need to **involve the railway sector**, railways agencies and railway infrastructure companies as well as any other transport actor in the area acting for the general interest; at the same time these should be open to fine tune and coordinate more to local administrations, spatial planning, environmental protection, the enterprises and of course the civil society;
3. **Coordinating** more and more with the other donors in the SEE Programme area is a priority to integrate interventions and avoiding duplication of activities. This would also allow better identifying how and when the intervention of the SEE Programme is adequate, the transnational character being well identified, and where other funding instruments are more suitable (included CBC Programmes);
4. The **limited financial means** of the SEE Transnational Cooperation Programme can be used – in particular when following a competitive call procedure - for a number of **soft activities** with transnational impact or tailor-made pre-investment projects, such as feasibility/impact studies, coordination and management activities, transnational services, ICT solutions, transnational coordination for cross border procedures, small scale investments and railway related horizontal issues;
5. **Pro-active top-down project development** can be more effective in case of big projects to allow solving the disproportion between needs and available financial resources; this will follow the identification of concrete transnational policy needs of strategic stakeholders and will need a new/adapted "top-down" programme framework and the development of clear terms of reference.

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